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September 16, 2010

TO: Each Supervisor
Robert Kay for
FROM: Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.
Director of Mental Health

SUBJECT: NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO ENTER INTO SOLE SOURCE CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH SPECIAL SERVICE FOR GROUPS

This memo is to comply with County contracting policy requirements for sole source contracts. It is the Department of Mental Health's (DMH) intent to enter into contract negotiations with Special Service for Groups (SSG) to provide residential mental and physical health supportive services to individuals who are mentally ill, not able to provide self care for significant health conditions and require enhanced staffing and support in managing their medical conditions to enable them to reside in open community settings.

There are a number of individuals with mental illness in institutional settings who cannot be placed in licensed adult residential facilities solely because they also have medical conditions that require on-going treatment, self care and monitoring that they are unable to manage due to their mental illness. Adult residential facilities that serve individuals with mental illness do not have the necessary staffing levels nor staff trained to provide this type of assistance for such individuals, and thus cannot accept them as residents. DMH proposes to contract with SSG to implement an Institution for Mental Diseases (IMD) Step-down for Special Needs Populations program with the staffing and capacity to serve these individuals, enabling their placement into the least restrictive community setting in a safe manner.

DMH will require SSG to design and implement a program that has the capacity to care for individuals with co-occurring mental health and medical disorders such as diabetes, incontinence and other conditions that require on-going self-care. The Special Needs Populations Program will include:

- Licensed adult residential facilities with enhanced staffing to assist with activities of daily living 24 hours per day, seven days per week;
- Treatment staff who will initiate and implement coordinated care plans that include both medical and mental health care; and

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- Education for clients to teach them self-care skills for their medical conditions, with the goal of transitioning into more open and less restrictive settings.

SSG is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing community-based solutions to the social and economic issues facing people in greatest need. SSG recently celebrated 50 years of providing quality human services to a diverse and multicultural community and has collaborated with DMH for more than 20 years to provide community-based mental health services for individuals in marginalized communities.

SSG operates an IMD Step-down program that, since its inception in 2007, has transitioned over 70 individuals with severe and persistent mental illness from Metropolitan State Hospital, acute hospitals and IMDs to less restrictive community settings across Los Angeles County. SSG IMD Step-down program mental health professionals are organized into site-based multidisciplinary teams with psychiatrists, psychiatric social workers, marriage and family therapists, nursing staff, case managers and substance abuse counselors. The program includes staff that is bilingual and bicultural, covering nine different languages. It uses a recovery model of services that assists clients in gaining the skills necessary to improve their functioning and social interactions. Staff provides services to both clients and their significant others on-site in the community.

During a regular IMD Step-down providers' meeting on May 11, 2010, DMH notified providers of the Department's intent to develop this specialized program for clients with co-occurring mental and physical health disorders. SSG was the only provider that expressed interest in contracting for a program that would provide enhanced care for the specified medical disorders. SSG is uniquely qualified to provide these services based on its history and its successful implementation and operation of the IMD Step-down program described above. In addition, SSG has consistently demonstrated its ability to recruit and hire in a timely manner personnel trained and knowledgeable for the various programs it operates. SSG has identified two of its current IMD Step-down facilities for the program, ensuring timely implementation upon Board approval. The two facilities are Villa Luren, with 15 beds for individuals with diabetes, and Founders, with 15 beds for individuals with incontinence.

The total proposed program cost is \$1,020,000, including \$642,994 in County General Funds and \$376,965 in Non-Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Federal Financial Participation. At any given time, the proposed program will serve 21 persons with Medi-Cal insurance and 9 uninsured persons. In addition to enabling the clients served by this program to live in a less restrictive community setting, the proposed program will cost \$600,000 less than the annual cost of \$1,620,600 for 30 IMD beds, where these individuals now reside.

Each Supervisor
September 16, 2010
Page 3

Unless otherwise instructed by a Board office within two weeks, DMH will proceed with entering into contract negotiations with SSG, working with County Counsel and the Chief Executive Office.

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c: Chief Executive Office
County Counsel